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Letter dated 7 November 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012), 2123 (2013), 2183 (2014), 2247 (2015), 2315 (2016) and 2384 (2017), I have the honour to convey the attached letters dated 8 June and 29 October 2018 from the Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, transmitting the forty-fifth and the forty-sixth reports on the activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see annexes I and II). The reports cover the periods from 1 March to 31 August 2017 and from 1 September 2017 to 28 February 2018, respectively.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annexes to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Please recycle

Annex I

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012), 2123 (2013), 2183 (2014), 2247 (2015) and 2315 (2016), please find enclosed the forty-fifth report on Operation Althea to the Council (see enclosure).

(*Signed*) Federica **Mogherini**

Enclosure

Report of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

I. Introduction

1. The present report covers the period from 1 March 2017 to 31 August 2017.

2. The Security Council, in its resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012), 2123 (2013), 2183 (2014), 2247 (2015) and 2315 (2016), requested that Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the European Union, report to the Council on the activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) at least at six-monthly intervals. This is the forty-fifth such report.

II. Political background

3. Following a period of positive developments motivated by the prospect of the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union, the progress of institutional reforms in the country has slowed down since April 2017, with a marked increase in political positioning and infighting as general elections scheduled for October 2018 approach.

4. Political elites and parties at all levels of government have already entered into a pre-electoral campaign posture. The previously strongly voiced enthusiasm among political leaders for advancing Bosnia and Herzegovina on its European Union path is being eclipsed by entrenched interests, short-termism and divisive politicking. The governing coalitions at both State and federation levels are increasingly fractious and risk falling apart. In addition, electoral reform, which is required to move the country towards European standards, thereby improving the democratic processes of future elections, remains outstanding. Furthermore, the urgent adoption, through dialogue, of limited election reform following the December 2016 ruling by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning specific electoral provisions on the Federation House of Peoples is key to preventing uncertainty over the conduct and the implementation of the results of the upcoming 2018 general elections. While accession to the European Union remains the stated strategic goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina for all significant political actors, maintaining their power base remains more important, especially in the run-up to the elections. Nevertheless, the vast majority of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina still look to the European Union as the only option for a better future. Other unresolved electoral issues, however, could also have a negative impact on the political situation.

5. During the reporting period, there was a positive dynamic in regional cooperation, marked in particular by some progress towards economic integration in the region, which culminated in the adoption of an action plan at the Western Balkans summit, held in Trieste, Italy, on 12 July 2017 to create a regional economic area.

6. Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to make some progress, albeit slow, in pursuit of its application for European Union membership. The work on the questionnaire addressed to Bosnia and Herzegovina by the European Commission has stimulated cooperation at a technical and administrative level. Thirty-six working

groups, under rotating State and entity chairs, began to meet productively as of June 2017 in order to harmonize the draft replies to the 3,242 questions.[1]

III. Security situation

7. While political antagonisms continued to be a source of tension within Bosnia and Herzegovina, the security situation in the country remained calm and stable overall. During the reporting period, while there was no threat to a safe and secure environment, stability has not been entrenched owing to several remaining internal and external factors of concern. These factors are directly and indirectly related to security and include divisive rhetoric, radicalization, social inequality, unemployment, risk of terrorism, returning foreign fighters, organized crime, external influences and growing political instability.

8. Although technically capable of addressing threats to law and order and maintaining a safe and secure environment in their own areas of responsibility, the 16 law enforcement agencies at the level of the State, the entities, the Brcko District and the cantons remain deficient when it comes to inter-agency engagement. Their effectiveness continues to be hampered by a lack of cooperation and coordination. Moreover, notwithstanding the unifying efforts of the defence reform, the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain de facto divided, and the authority of the chain of command is still challenged by political interference.

IV. European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina activities

9. During the reporting period, EUFOR continued to deliver on its mandate in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Operation Althea remained effective in fulfilling its executive mandate, namely, to support Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment, while serving as a deterrent against the resurgence of conflict. While retaining its executive mandate, the main effort of Operation Althea continued to focus on the capacity-building and training of the armed forces.

10. The effectiveness and sustainability of the efforts of EURFOR with regard to capacity-building and training are reaching their limits. While there have been some significant achievements, the extent of the beneficial effect of capacity-building and training on the armed forces is held back by a number of issues affecting them, notably the lack of proper equipment, materiel and resources; the high fluctuation of personnel; a weak, ethnically based personnel management system; the large amount of resources dedicated to guarding and managing the obsolete surplus of weapons and ammunition; and the lack of a truly effective management mechanism to synchronize, align or even de-conflict the efforts of the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, international organizations and other bilateral training initiatives.

11. The implementation of the ammunition, weapons and explosives disposal programme is a key component of a safe and secure environment. By making appropriate use of the authority granted to it through Security Council resolutions, EUFOR continued to be well placed to provide technical support and maintain pressure on the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to pursue the conclusion of their master plan for the disposal programme (developed with the support of EUFOR).

[1] Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted the replies to the questionnaire on 28 February 2018.

During the reporting period, the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities did make progress in that regard, albeit slow.

12. The level of progress in the locally owned mine-action sector has slowed down considerably over the past years. Fulfilling its monitoring obligations under the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Annexes thereto, EUFOR also acts as the European Union delegation's effective situational awareness provider on the progress in demining in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2016, both EUFOR/the European Union delegation and the Bosnia and Herzegovina State auditors independently assessed the failure of the current Bosnia and Herzegovina mine action strategy, highlighting alarming shortcomings of a systemic and political nature as the main obstacles. A new strategy is being prepared to support a request by Bosnia and Herzegovina for an extension of its current deadline of 2019 under the obligations of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction until 2025. To support the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities (the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre), the new strategy will be preceded by a European Union-financed re-survey of the "suspected hazardous area", to be completed by the end of 2019 in order to establish a credible and feasible end date for the demining process. Given its unique authority in this matter, under Security Council resolutions, EUFOR is expected to accompany the re-survey project and the planning and implementation of the new strategy.

13. Notwithstanding the efforts of EUFOR and the broader international community, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains far from fulfilling the entire range of its international obligations and is unable to fully exploit the support offered by international actors.

V. Outlook

14. The period ahead will be of key importance for the future development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with general elections scheduled for October 2018. The campaigning is already under way for the elections and may provide pretexts for political leaders to again postpone vital reforms. Political stagnation on the implementation of important reforms and unresolved electoral issues could therefore pose a serious risk. Delivering on further European Union oriented reforms and completing the work necessary for a future European Commission Opinion on the European Union membership application of Bosnia and Herzegovina will remain essential. Political uncertainty and increased tensions may also amplify the risks to a safe and secure environment in the run-up to and during the general elections.

15. Against these developments, Operation Althea continues to adapt and evolve, bearing in mind that stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not entrenched owing to several remaining internal and external factors of concern.

Annex II

In accordance with Security Council resolutions1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012), 2123 (2013), 2183 (2014), 2247 (2015) and 2315 (2016), please find enclosed the forty-sixth report on Operation Althea to the Council (see enclosure).

(*Signed*) Federica **Mogherini**

Enclosure

Report of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

I. Introduction

1. The present report covers the period from 1 September 2017 to 28 February 2018.

2. The Security Council, in its resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012), 2123 (2013), 2183 (2014), 2247 (2015), 2315 (2016) and 2384 (2017), requested that Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the European Union, report to the Council on the activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) at least at six-monthly intervals. This is the forty-sixth such report.

II. Security situation

3. The security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained calm and stable overall, and there was no threat to a safe and secure environment during the reporting period. Stability, however, has not been entrenched owing to several remaining internal and external factors of concern. These factors are directly and indirectly related to security and include an increase in divisive rhetoric, also ahead of the upcoming elections, radicalization, social inequality, unemployment, risk of terrorism, returning foreign fighters, organized crime, external influences and growing political instability. Concerns were raised about the appearance of (unarmed) organized groups unconnected to official security or defence structures, as well as on the procurement of weapons for the Republika Srpska police. Although technically capable of addressing threats to law and order and maintaining a safe and secure environment in their own areas of responsibility, the 16 law enforcement agencies remain deficient when it comes to inter-agency engagement.

III. European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina activities

4. During the reporting period, EUFOR continued to fulfil its executive mandate, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and provide support to the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment, while serving as a deterrent against a return to conflict.

5. EUFOR continued to provide the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina with capacity-building and both individual and combined (collective) training, alongside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In 2017, EUFOR conducted a small percentage of the total individual training received by the armed forces. The majority was delivered through bilateral activities.[1] EUFOR had initially conducted train-the-trainer courses, which have now resulted in the armed forces conducting such individual training themselves (under EUFOR mentoring and monitoring). In the area

[1] To date, Bosnia and Herzegovina has defence cooperation agreements with 23 countries. In 2016, 270 bilateral training activities were held. The report for 2017 has not been released, but the figure could be even higher. EUFOR supported 6 per cent of all capacity-building and training activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

of combined (collective) training, six events were conducted throughout 2017 between the EUFOR multinational battalion and the armed forces. The training was aimed primarily at addressing the increase in the interoperability between EUFOR and the armed forces and improving the latter's overall capacities.

6. A strategic review of Operation Althea was conducted and presented to the European Union member States in November 2017. As a result of that process, the member States decided, on the basis of military assessment and advice, to refocus Operation Althea on its executive mandate and to phase out, by the end of 2018, those elements of capacity-building and training that had reached their limits and were no longer necessary (individual training), while the combined (collective training) provided by the EUFOR multinational battalion would continue. EUFOR tasks will remain under regular review by the Security Council, notably through the next strategic review, scheduled for 2019.

7. The eradication of landmines and other explosive remnants of war within Bosnia and Herzegovina remains far from completion, with 1,058 km^2 (approximately 2.2 per cent of the total country size) still classified as a suspected hazardous area, containing some 79,000 mines still requiring clearance. During the reporting period, EUFOR continued to deliver on its task of monitoring the clearing of minefields and obstacles, in line with the provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Annexes thereto.[2] This task is conducted with a small team of five individuals (two military personnel and three locally hired civilians). To reduce the risk of mine incidents, the17 liaison and observation teams of EUFOR continued to provide mine risk education to local communities and schools.[3] It was also decided that the European Commission, through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, would support a strategic reset of the demining effort in three phases, beginning in March 2018 with a resurvey project, in support of the goal of a mine-free Bosnia and Herzegovina by 2025.[4] EUFOR will contribute to the project oversight. Its powers, under the General Framework Agreement, will be useful in monitoring and mentoring its implementation and provide the donor community with strategic advice and technical monitoring on further demining projects in the framework of the new Bosnia and Herzegovina mine action strategy for the period 2018–2025.

8. EUFOR continued to oversee the ammunition, weapons and explosives storage facilities and the movement of them,[5] in cooperation with other international partners

[2] Bosnia and Herzegovina has been responsible for demining since 2012, with EUFOR retaining the right to monitor, mentor, advise and liaise with demining activities. Articles VI.3e of annex 1-A of the General Framework Agreement explicitly tasks EUFOR to "monitor the clearing of minefields and obstacles". EUFOR does not conduct clearance itself, although it maintains a limited capability to conduct minor clearance for force protection and freedom of movement reasons.

[3] In 2017, EUFOR provided 17,786 people in Bosnia and Herzegovina with mine risk education, giving them training on how to recognize mine risks and what to do if they believe they are in a minefield. Liaison and observation teams also held 3,298 formal meetings with key leaders in their respective areas, took part in 1,907 informal meetings with local people and attended 695 public events.

[4] The current deadline for Bosnia and Herzegovina (under the obligations contained in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction) is to be free of mines and explosive remnants of war by 2019. This deadline is clearly unachievable. It is understood that the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities will request the extension of this deadline until 2025.

[5] The responsibility to dispose ammunition, weapons and explosives surpluses in Bosnia and Herzegovina was transferred to the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities in 2007, but EUFOR retained, under its executive mandate, the right to observe, monitor and inspect any facility or activity that may have military capability, and specifically to ensure compliance with the relevant regulations under the General Framework Agreement (annex 1-A, arts. VI.6 and VI.9c).

(the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the General Framework Agreement. EUFOR also continued to support and coordinate with the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities on the implementation of the ammunitions, weapons and explosives master plan (developed with the support of EUFOR). In 2017, some 4,128 tons of ammunition and explosives were inspected, leaving 685 tons to be inspected by the end of 2018. During the reporting period, the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities did make significant progress. As at 31 December 2017, there were 16,100 tons of ammunition still stored in 12 sites throughout the country, with an estimated 8,000 tons to be disposed of in 2018 and 2019. In July 2017, the European Union assistance to stockpile management, technical support and ammunition surplus reduction project was launched to ensure close cooperation between local authorities (the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and partners in the international community (the European Union, EUFOR, OSCE, UNDP and the United States of America), and which is designed to contribute to the disposal of approximately 3,000 tons of unsafe and unstable ammunition. With regard to small arms and light weapons, 62,000 weapons have to be marked and registered, while the amount for disposal[6] (as part of the ammunition, weapons and explosives master plan) has to be defined by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Defence. The first phase, namely, the creation of the legal framework, was completed in December 2017. The second phase, namely, the preparation and marking and registration of small arms and light weapons, commenced in November 2017 and should be completed by the end of 2019. The third phase, which is the complete disposal of the small arms and light weapons surplus, is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020. All other activities regarding safety, security and training as part of the ammunition, weapons and explosives master plan are ongoing.

9. EUFOR conducted two exercises during the reporting period. One was a planning exercise held in November 2017 for the command elements of all designated reserve forces, while the other was a large-scale exercise conducted in October 2017, which brought together EUFOR, NATO/European Union reserves, the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, for the first time, Bosnia and Herzegovina law enforcement agencies to train for the maintenance of a safe and secure environment in a realistic scenario.

IV. Outlook

10. Operation Althea continues to adapt and evolve, bearing in mind that stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not entrenched owing to several remaining internal and external factors of concern. In the period ahead, EUFOR will discontinue parts of its capacity-building and training activities that are no longer needed and refocus on its core mandate, which is to support Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment, including during the upcoming election period. EUFOR tasks will remain under regular review by the Security Council, notably through the next strategic review, scheduled for 2019.

[6] Disposal includes destruction, sales and donations.